WHATEVER WORKS

Confident Living for People with Impaired Vision

The Lighthouse Inc.

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"Whatever Works"

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The Lighthouse Inc. is the world's leading resource on vision impairment and rehabilitation. Its mission, philosophy and advocacy efforts are carried out through national and international programs to enable people who are blind or partially sighted to lead independent and productive lives. Headquartered in New York City, The Lighthouse provides regional direct services to people of all ages who have vision loss. It also conducts major research studies in the field and offers a broad range of educational opportunities, keeping eye care professionals and others in the field of vision rehabilitation up to date.

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introduction

This booklet was developed to provide suggestions and simple solutions to people who lose their vision during their adult years, and to assist families and friends in their efforts to provide support.

The philosophy of The Lighthouse Inc. is to enable people to live independently. While we understand that not all techniques are helpful to everyone, they are intended to help people with impaired vision better cope with some ordinary tasks and everyday activities.

We encourage you to be creative and try several of the tips to find the one which suits you best.

Remember, whatever works and is safe, is the best one for you.

If you or someone you know needs additional help or would like to locate vision rehabilitation services nationwide, call The Lighthouse Inc. Information and Resource Service, toll-free, at 1-800-334-5497.

in the beginning

Here are some general suggestions to help family members and friends be at ease with people who are vision impaired.

- People with vision problems can be independent.
- Be supportive of the new skills that a person with impaired vision is learning and needs to practice.
- Encourage the use of special equipment and optical devices, as these items help the person be independent.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice. People with vision problems usually have normal hearing.
- Introduce yourself as recognizing voices can be difficult for some people.
- Speak directly to a person with impaired vision. Most people can answer for themselves.
- Rather than using gestures and hand signals to convey instructions, directions or size, describe the information.

in the beginning

- Be clear with your instructions. Many people use "right" when they mean "yes"; other words like "here," "there" or "this" are vague and don't give enough information.

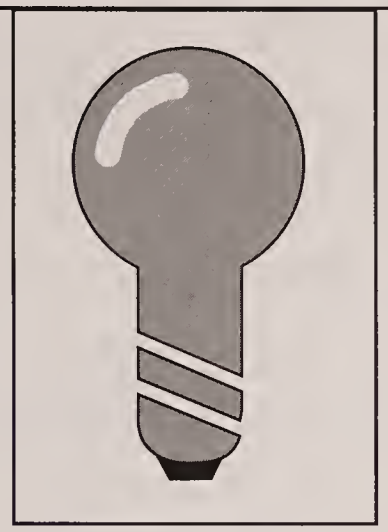
- People with impaired vision can make decisions for themselves. We need to respect these decisions rather than to interject that they "know what is best."

- It's o.k. to use words like "look" or "see," as they are part of normal conversation. People with impaired vision use these words themselves.

- Let a person know you are leaving so that he/she won't be left talking to him/herself.

- Last but not least, treat people with impaired vision as you would want to be treated.

lighting



Lighting is a basic area of daily living which can have a strong impact on visual functioning. Sometimes simple changes can greatly enhance a person's ability to complete a specific task.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO TRY:

- You may think that more or brighter light is always better. The truth is, more light can cause glare which can make seeing more difficult for some people.

- Flexible lighting, i.e., gooseneck, swing arm or adjustable lamps can be positioned in a variety of ways to focus the light on the specific task.

- Under-counter lighting can provide task lighting for kitchen or study work areas.

- Bring the light close to the task or work site to get maximum benefit rather than keeping it high overhead.

- Incandescent lights are often preferred over florescent, but this should be tested out on an individual basis.

lighting

- Halogen lamps should be used with caution and always with a coated bulb. Avoid looking directly into any bulb.

- Sometimes you may see better on a cloudy day than on a sunny day. Vision can change with the weather conditions.

- Use lamp shades to prevent glare from bare bulbs.

- Be aware that shiny surfaces, polished metal surfaces, table tops and floors can also cause glare. A table-cloth may cut out the glare from a formica table.

- Some papers, e.g., paper used in magazines or store circulars have a finished surface that can contribute to glare and interfere with reading or writing tasks.

- Sunshine streaming into a room can add to glare. If this is a problem and economics permit, keep lights on during the day to equalize lighting from indoor and outdoor sources and/or use curtains or shades.

- To reduce glare outdoors wear eye protection, such as sunglasses with UV coating, and hats with brims.

color and contrast

Using color and contrast can provide the right help for some people. Simple changes can enhance a person's ability to perform everyday tasks.

- Contrasting colors, black and white or light and dark, help objects or shapes stand out. For example, use a dark place mat under a light colored dinner plate or bowl.

- Small things, like using a dark switch plate on a light wall or making sure the door knob contrasts with the door, can prove helpful.

- Solid colors work best. Patterns, stripes or checks can blend visually and be confusing.

- Some people can see certain colors and not others, depending on their vision. Determine which colors work best for you.

Many other color contrast suggestions are made throughout the book.

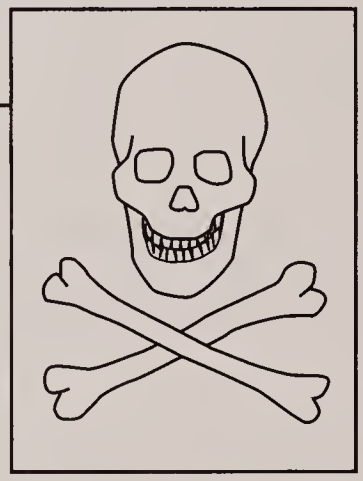
home safety

Home Safety is usually an area of great concern especially for family and friends. Dangerous situations or unsafe habits are not always the result of changing vision. In this section you will find suggestions for adaptive safety techniques.

GENERAL

Every household item should have a specific place and should be returned to its place immediately after use. Encourage your family members to also return items to their proper place. It will make locating them easier for everyone.

TOXIC SUBSTANCES



Items like bug spray, ammonia, bleach, plant fertilizer and cleaning products are common in most homes. Clearly label toxic substances so they can be easily identified and keep them secure in a designated place.

Containers that are shaped alike should be clearly marked and stored in separate locations e.g., deodorant and hair sprays, room freshener, etc. You may wish to use large print labels or tactile markers, like rubber bands or shapes cut from sandpaper to distinguish the containers.

EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEMS

- Smoke alarms should be periodically tested and kept working with fresh batteries.

  IDEA: Change the battery on your birthday.

- Personal alert systems now exist and are available through a number of companies that specialize in this service.

TUB/SHOWER SAFETY

- Mats with non-skid backing or textured surface or friction tape/decals that provide traction. Choose friction tape/decals that contrast to the color of your tub and/or shower.

- For increased safety, have professionally installed rails added to your tub/shower.

- Tub seats may be helpful to some people.

  NOTE: Soap dishes, shower doors and towel racks are not designed as supports and may give way from the wall.

- Adjust the shower/bath temperature before you get in and double check the temperature again when you are ready to enter the tub or shower.

- To avoid scalding, turn on the cold water first, then add the hot water. When finished, turn the hot water off first.

  IDEA: The hot setting or knob can be marked with tape or a rubber band for easy identification.

- While some people prefer a bath, showering can be safer than bathing.

- Float a brightly colored toy or sponge in the water to help you see the water level.

- Put a contrasting mark at the usual level of the water and fill the tub to that point. A decal, tread strip, tape or paint stripe could help mark the right spot.

- Commercial tub water level indicators are now available.

- To keep track of the soap, use soap on a rope, brightly colored soap, or soap in a nylon stocking.

- Use brightly colored towels that contrast with the wall for easier location.

HAZARDS AND OBSTACLES

- Cabinet or closet doors should be fully closed or fully open. Doors left partially open are unsafe and can cause accidents.

- The door knob can easily be marked with a piece of yarn, tape or a rubber band to help identify your room or apartment door.

- Secure scatter rugs to eliminate falls. This is especially useful in bathrooms or in doorways. Non-skid rug pads or rug tape can be placed under scatter rugs.

- Repair or replace worn or torn floor covering that could cause a fall.

- Secure cords with tape or put them against the wall behind furniture to prevent accidents.

- Extension cords can be a fire hazard if overloaded. A power cord with a surge protector is safer and easier to use, if an extension cord is necessary.

- Thresholds and steps sometimes blend in with floors and are hard to see. Use contrasting paint, safety tape or tread strips to highlight these areas, especially the first and last steps on a stairway.

- Use commercially available safety tape, tread strips, or edging, found in hardware or floor covering stores, instead of masking tape or electrical tape, which were not made for this purpose.

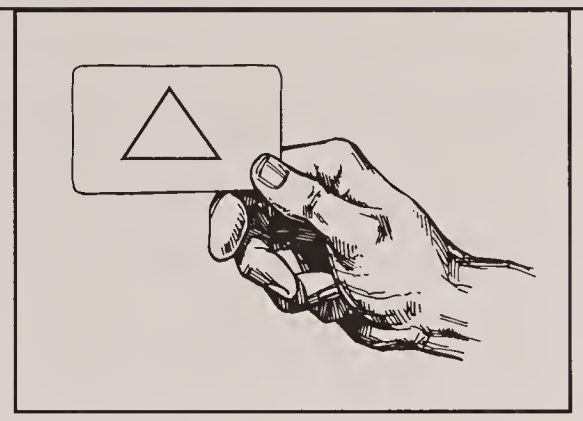
- Remind your family to keep furniture in place and to discuss possible changes with you, so you can move safely within your home at all times.

- Sharp edges can be dangerous. Prime locations to check include coffee tables, countertop corners and file cabinets.

- Coffee tables can also create an extra, low obstacle. You may prefer to move the coffee table away to eliminate bruising and falls. Consider placing the coffee table on an area rug, providing both contrast and a tactual clue to its presence.

labeling and marking

- There are many ways to label and mark items. The trick is to use a method that works for you.



Remember: Color, contrast, textures and special features can ALL be used as labeling and marking methods.

- Mark only essential numbers or items to avoid a cluttered dial or label.

Idea: Mark 350 on your oven dial, 68 on the thermostat, the start position for the regular cycle on your washer.

- Do not be obsessed with labeling. There are a number of items easily recognized by their touch, shape, sound or smell, depending on the item. Good organization can also cut down on your need for additional labeling.

Ideas: Spices can be identified by smell and taste; clothing details, such as lace, buttons, trims or textures, can help you distinguish garments; perfume bottles usually have distinct shapes and colognes have distinct scents.

labeling and marking

- Large print labels can be created using index cards and a wide felt tip marker. These can be attached to canned goods, food packages and medicine bottles using rubber bands.

  Idea: Save the labels as you use up the item and you have a head start on your grocery list. Then reuse the labels on the newly purchased items.

- Common household items that can be used as markers include: rubber bands, pipe cleaners, toothpicks, cork/felt dots, nail polish, glue, electrical tape, safety pins, beads, sandpaper, velcro, T-shirt paint and many craft items, too.

- Commercial products for labeling are also available.

  Examples: Hi-Marks, Loc Dots, Wikki Sticks, Spot-N-Line pens, etc.

communication

Communication covers many everyday tasks, such as reading, writing, and using the telephone. Because the majority of suggestions in this booklet are aimed at helping people to live with a recent vision loss, non-braille solutions and suggestions are given. Braille, however, is an important mode of communication for people with impaired vision.

Many people who lose some of their vision later in life, and are just beginning to cope with the changes resulting from this loss, choose to use other communication methods, such as large print, low vision devices and auditory equipment or a combination of methods. Many older people successfully learn to use braille for everyday tasks such as writing, labeling, playing cards and telephone numbers. The decision to learn braille is a personal one and should be made by the individual. The Lighthouse or your local vision rehabilitation agency can discuss the benefits of braille and the availability of programs for learning braille.

TELEPHONE

Special Telephone Services:

- Local telephone companies provide a variety of special services and programs for consumers with special needs.

  In the NY area, two such programs are Directory Exemption and Operator Assistance.

  Directory Exemption: Provides information as a free service to the home telephone number of the registered consumer who has special needs.

  Operator Assistance: Provides operator dialing assistance at no additional charge to registered, special needs consumers.

Contact your local telephone company for registration forms and additional information.

Telephone Dialing:

- Large numbered templates that fit on existing telephones are available from the telephone company and many other commercial sources.

- All telephones are identical in number display (rotary or push button) making it easy to memorize the location of each number.

- Rotary Dial: Finger method

  Using your right hand with fingers together, put the pinky finger in #1, ring finger in #2, middle finger in #3, and index finger in #4. The index finger also reaches over one more space to #5. For the higher numbers, begin with your fingers together, put your pinky finger in #0, ring finger in #9, middle finger in #8, index finger in #7. The index finger also reaches over one more space to the #6.

- Three Line Marking

  Place three ridges of "High Marks", glued match sticks, or alternatives from the center of the dial radiating out to the finger holes for the numbers 3, 6 and 9. To locate the required number to be dialed, move your index finger along the ridge closest to the desired number.

- Push button dial: Three finger method

  Using the index, middle and ring fingers, place your fingers on the second row of the dial (numbers 4,5,6).

This is the "home row". The index finger can easily reach up to 1 or down to 7. Likewise with the middle finger on 5, it can reach up to 2, and down to 8 and 0. The ring finger begins on 6 and can easily reach up to 3 and down to 9. To locate the home row more quickly, put a locator dot, a piece of tape or other marking on the 5 button.

- Today, many telephones are equipped with a memory system, enabling you to dial a number by pressing only one button. You may find this type of phone useful. In addition, some telephone companies offer a voice-activated dialing system.

Emergency:

- In an emergency, dial O and state the problem to the operator. According to material published by NYNEX®, this is faster and safer in a true emergency for people who are visually impaired.

- Memory telephones may also be helpful when programmed with the local emergency numbers.

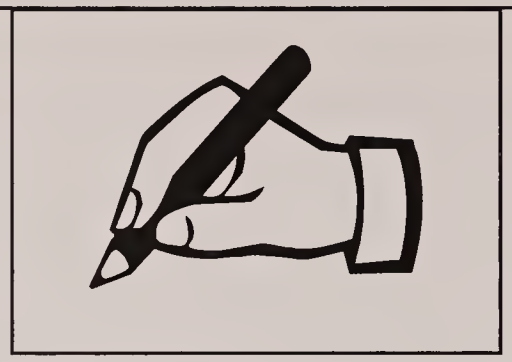
Telephone Numbers:

- Telephone numbers can be written in large print, braille or recorded on a cassette tape. It is a good idea to keep telephone numbers together, whether in a writing pad, notebook, file card box or on cassette. Whichever method you use, be sure to keep the numbers in a handy place near the telephone.

- If you can read large print, use a wide-tipped black marker on white paper. The size of the numbers will depend on your vision, a page may hold only one telephone number with 3 inch numerals or several phone numbers in a 1/2" or 1" size.

- Large format address/telephone books are also available commercially.

SIGNATURE



- When a signature is required, a signature guide may be helpful. This template has a rectangular opening that is placed over the spot where the signature is to be written. You sign your name within the opening of the guide.

- Another way to locate the proper place to sign is to ask someone to make a fold, which you can feel as a ridge along the line where the signature is required.

- Have someone place the index finger of your free hand at the beginning of the signature line and sign your name to the right of your finger.

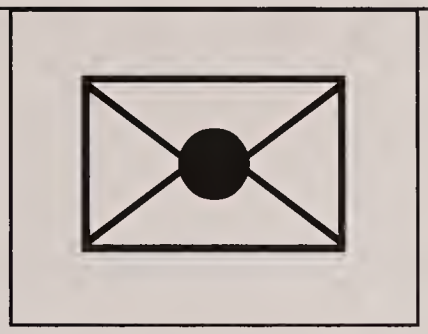
- A Post-it note can be used to define the writing line, as it creates a slight ridge. It can be easily removed when done. The top edge of the Post-it should be just below the signature line.

- It is important to continue to use your signature and handwriting as they are unique to you.

- If you have low vision, you may be able to locate the signature line if it is traced with a dark pen.

handwriting

LETTERS



- Bold lined paper and felt tip pens may be preferable, if you have low vision.

- Place writing paper on a contrasting surface to make it easier to see the edges of the paper.

- There are a variety of felt tip and wide marker pens available commercially. Try a variety of pens to find the ones that work best for you.

- Letter writing guides are also available commercially. Examples include black plastic templates, full page writing guides and Marks script board. These guides ensure that you write non-overlapping lines and are usually placed over plain paper.

- Letters can also be recorded and then mailed using postal privilege for people who are blind or physically handicapped. Special mailing containers for cassettes and "Free Matter for the Blind" stamps are commercially available.

PAPER MONEY

- Bills can be sorted and placed in different sections of your wallet, and/or folded according to different denominations.

- There are several folding systems. As long as you use one consistently and identify the denominations, it is correct.

Idea: One common folding system:

$ 1 – One dollar bill remains unfolded in the wallet.
$ 5 – Five dollar bill is folded in half with short ends together.
$10 – Ten dollar bill is folded in half with long sides together.
$20 – Twenty dollar bill is folded in half and then in half again.

- Sections can be created in your wallet by using flexible plastic, or sectioned wallets are commercially available.

money

COINS

- U.S. coins can be identified by touch. Pennies and nickels have smooth edges. Dimes and quarters have rough edges.

- You may want to use your fingernail to check the edges of the coins for easier identification.

- The coins also have differences in size. Smooth edged coins: the nickel is larger than the penny. Rough edged coins: the quarter is larger than the dime.

MONEY SAFETY

- When making a purchase, try to use a bill that is closest to the amount of the sale.

- Tell the cashier what bill denomination you are using to pay.

- Ask the cashier to state the bills he or she is giving back to you in change.

personal grooming

Feeling good about yourself helps build your self esteem. Continuing to care for your clothing and all areas of personal grooming is possible and important.

CLOTHING IDENTIFICATION

- Many items of clothing can be identified by their texture, style, buttons, collars, hems, etc. Look for these differences.

- Garments may be separated by color or function. Casual clothes may be placed at one end of the closet and formal clothing placed at the other end. Grouping clothes by use or type helps eliminate endless searching through the closet.

- Clothing can also be organized into matching outfits. A suit, shirt, tie and slacks can all be put on one hanger or on several hangers tied together.

  Idea: Make a large print label or cut a geometric shape from cardboard or plastic and place it over the hanger to help identify colors.

personal grooming

- A variety of systems can be used directly on clothing to separate colors. Create a code system by placing tiny brass safety pins or different shaped buttons on the labels that are inside your clothing or in a place that will not cause discomfort when worn.

  Idea: Using small safety pins: white = no pin; blue = one pin horizontal; black = one pin vertical; red = two pins crossed; etc.

- Create a master list of your code and keep it in a form that you can easily refer to, such as cassette tape, large print, or braille. Also have a print copy so family members or assistants can help keep up the system.

- If you know the braille alphabet, clothing labels in braille can be used for your color code.

- You may find it helpful to keep a flashlight by the closet door to give you more light when reading labels or choosing an outfit.

- Dividers placed in drawers or cupboards can keep your things in their proper place. A variety of plastic trays and adjustable drawer dividers are available in hardware or department stores.

- Egg cartons work well for organizing jewelry and are inexpensive.

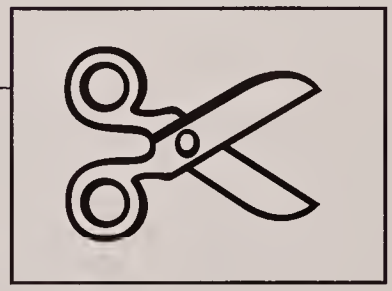
DENTAL CARE

- Place your index finger next to the bristles of your toothbrush so it serves as a guide for putting a small amount of toothpaste onto the toothbrush.

- Contrast can be useful. Switch to a dark toothbrush or use a contrasting wash cloth and place the toothbrush on it for added visibility when dispensing toothpaste.

- If your toothbrush bristles are white, use colored toothpaste.

HAIR CARE



- Consult a hair stylist or barber for an attractive, easy to manage hair style.

- Mark shampoo and conditioner containers with a rubber band or place one in a different shape/ size container.

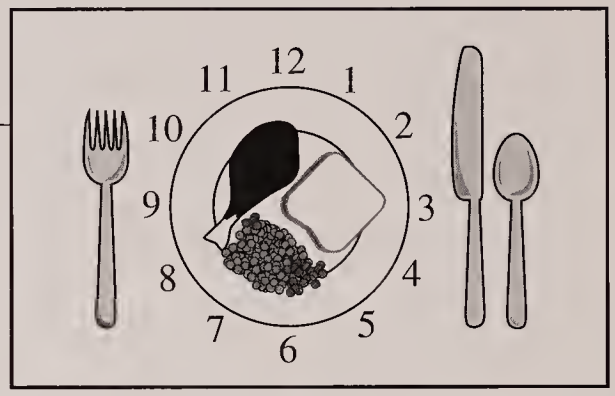
MEDICATIONS

- Labeling is important to identify each medication and its proper use. Any personal marking system will work, as long as it is understandable to you and is consistent.

- A variety of organizers in many shapes and sizes are available commercially.

- If you keep medications in a bottle and have difficulty remembering that you have taken the required daily amount, rubber bands can be put on the bottle equal to the number of doses required in a day. Remove one band each time the medication is taken. Replace the bands every morning and start the system all over again.

- Color contrast can help to highlight plates, place settings and food. Serve dark food on a light plate or use place mats between the dish and table to make the plate more visible.



LOCATING FOOD ON A PLATE

- A person with sight can describe the location of food to you using the clock method. (Meat at 6:00, vegetables at 2:00).

- Use the tip of a knife or fork to gently probe the food and determine what it is and where it is on the plate.

- Certain foods are difficult to pick up, like peas or corn. "Loose" foods may be corralled.

  Idea: Use a piece of bread, a knife or a roll to act as a wall or a "pusher" to help guide the food onto the fork.

- When eating, move the fork towards the center of the plate. It helps to minimize the chance that items will fall to the table and will make it easier to locate the remaining food.

- Be aware of the weight of food on your fork or spoon. With practice, you can gauge if the amount of food is appropriate.

- It is fine to make special requests such as asking to have meat cut or boned when eating away from home or with unique cuisine.

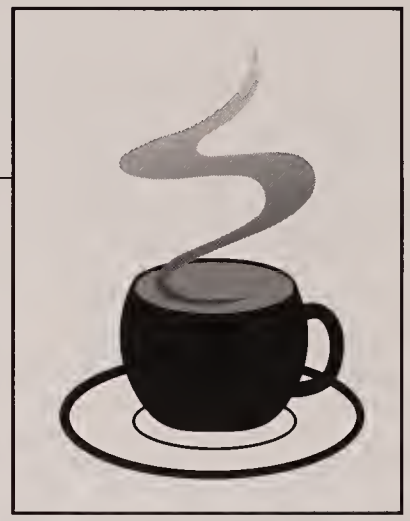
- When seasoning foods, shake a bit of salt or pepper into the palm of your hand and put a pinch at a time on your food. This helps eliminate fast-flowing shakers from ruining your dish.

  Note: Salt is heavy and you can accurately differentiate salt from pepper by comparing the weight of the shakers.

POURING COLD LIQUID

- Use your index finger to position the spout over and in contact with the edge of the glass. Slowly pour the liquid into the glass using your index finger to gauge the level of the liquid. Listen to the change in sound as you pour the liquid. Also, become familiar with the weight of the empty glass and the change when the glass is full.

- A tray or pan with short sides can be used as a work space to hold the glass and confine any possible spill.



POURING HOT LIQUID

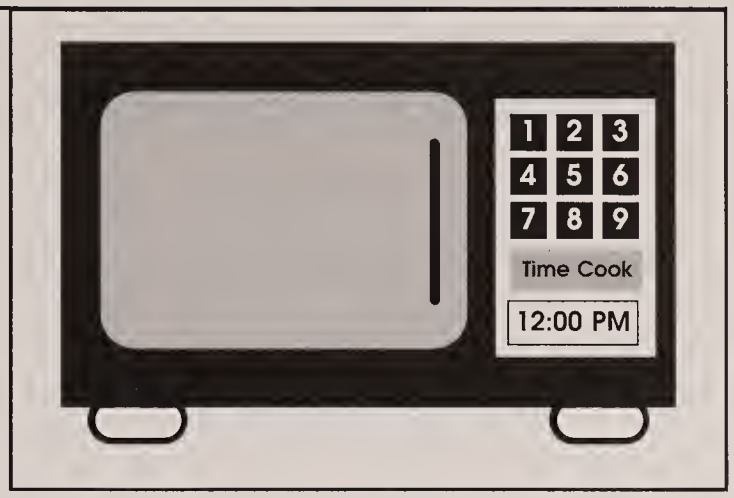
- Put your finger slightly over the edge of the cup and stop pouring as soon as you feel the warmth of the liquid. Be sure your finger is away from the direct flow of the liquid.

- It may be easier to pour over the sink or a tray.

- Color contrast can be very helpful. Pouring a dark liquid into a light color cup is more visible and vice versa.

- Liquid level indicators or hot beverage dispensers are available commercially and can increase safety for some people.

heating up food



- Smaller, counter top appliances may be safer and easier to use for heating food, than the full oven or stove.

  Examples: Hot beverage maker, toaster oven, microwave.

- Put additional task lighting near appliances.

  Examples: Small, gooseneck or flexible lamp, under-cabinet lighting or a combination of both.

- Learn to listen or feel for clicks of various settings on your appliances.

- Mark dials or knobs at key points. (See Labeling)

- Develop the habit of turning off the appliance before removing the food.

- Use an oven mitt in place of a pot holder to prevent burns on your wrists, forearms, or backs of your hands.

- Develop a habit of always using a timer when heating up foods. This helps ensure the food is done, prevents over-cooking, and may remind you that the stove or oven is in use.

getting around

Some people with impaired vision may be reluctant to go out because they are uncomfortable getting around in public. Here are some basic tips to help you and your friends and family travel as a team and make the experience more enjoyable

- Some people with visual impairments utilize canes when traveling. Instruction in cane use, orientation skills, indoor travel skills, street crossings and use of public transportation is provided by professional mobility instructors at the Lighthouse and at other rehabilitation agencies.

- Other individuals may use a guide dog. They receive training from specialized schools located across the country.

- Remind your friends and family to leave you in contact with an object, such as a chair or a wall, rather than leaving you in an open area, which can be confusing or frightening.

- Pushing or grabbing in an effort to be of assistance can cause an accident or embarrassing situation. People should first ask if assistance is needed and then use the correct sighted guide techniques when walking with you or another individual.

getting around

- Take your friend or family member's arm when walking together to be safe.

- When walking with another person using the sighted guide technique, take hold of the guide's arm with a firm grip, thumb on the outside, and just above the elbow. The guide walks normally about one half pace ahead. You will be able to feel and follow his or her movement. It helps to be told when you are coming to a turn, a stop or a door.*

- Walk with a guide to a distinct part of a chair, usually the front. Your guide should describe the chair, such as whether or not it has arms and its position, under the table or facing out. Your guide should place your hand on the back or seat of the chair. In most situations, you will be able to seat yourself. If there is a table in front of the chair, one hand should be placed on the chair back and your other hand on the table edge, pull the chair out and seat yourself.*

- To travel through a narrow passage, such as a doorway, the guide will move the guiding arm behind his or her back and visually check that you are standing behind him or her. The guide will walk through the narrow space with you and resume the regular sighted guide position when both of you are past the narrow walkway.*

- When getting into a car, your guide should say whether you will enter the front or back seat. Your guide should place one of your hands on the door of the car and the other on the back of the seat. You should now be able to seat yourself easily.*

- To walk independently within a familiar environment, such as your home, using a trailing technique, your arm that is closest to the wall should be held in front of your hip about 18 inches. The back of your hand should be in light contact with the wall, fingers extended though bent towards the floor. This position becomes very inconspicuous with practice and adds to your safety within your home.*

- To avoid injury from a partially opened cabinet or door, use the upper protective technique. Place the back of your hand on the opposite shoulder. Move your forearm out from your body until your elbow is at 90°. Keep your fingers extended and maintain this position as you walk to protect your face and neck.*

** Techniques provided by Deborah Rower, Supervisor of Orientation and Mobility, Hudson Valley Region of The Lighthouse Inc.*

leisure

Don't assume that vision changes will result in the loss of participation in your favorite leisure activities. You may continue activities with simple modifications or adaptations or you may choose a new and totally different leisure activity.

GENERAL TIPS

- Be patient with yourself when trying a new or adapted activity. Like everyone else, it usually takes extra time in the beginning to master a new task.

- There are many ways to adapt or modify an activity. Experiment and find what works the best for you.

READING

- Some books, magazines and newspapers are available in large print, either commercially or on loan in public libraries.

  Examples: Reader's Digest, The New York Times

- Radio Reading Services are available in many cities. This service reads the daily newspapers and local periodicals over special broadcast stations. Books and magazines on cassette tape and recorded disk are available from the Library of Congress National

Library Services Talking Book Program. This is a free service to people who are legally blind or physically handicapped.

- Many commercial bookstores sell abridged cassette recordings of popular books. They may also be available on loan at your local library.

NEEDLEWORK

- Needle threading devices are commercially available.

  Examples: Wire loop threaders, Infilla threader, Spread-eye needles, self-threading needles.

- Self-threading needles: Place the needle in a small bar of soap or flat cork. Firmly grasp the thread with both hands, leaving an inch or less free between your hands. Locate the top of the needle with your thumb or finger. Use this as a guide to fit the thread into the "V" notch on the top of the needle. To lock the thread into the eye of the needle, pull down firmly with both hands until you hear and/or feel the thread click into place. You will learn to use the correct amount of pressure to lock the thread without breaking it as you practice this technique.

- Organize and label threads/yarns by colors.
- Handling thread may be easier if you pull it across beeswax, this helps it resist curling.
- Outline patterns with felt tip pens or tactual markings, such as Hi Marks or colored tape.
- Contrasting surfaces can be helpful when cutting patterns, sewing straight seams or marking edges of handiwork.
- Needles with larger eyes may be easier to thread.

CARDS AND GAMES

- A variety of large print cards are commercially available.
- Contrasting surfaces, such as colored tablecloths or place mats, can be especially helpful when playing bridge or other card or board games.
- Some commercial board games like Scrabble or checkers are available in large print or have tactual markings or braille.

GARDENING

- Sensory gardening can be enjoyable. Growing plants with distinguishable scents or tactile clues can help with plant identification.

  Examples: Geraniums (mint, lemon, rose), herbs (basil – broad leaf, thyme – small leaf).

- Using large print markers or tactual borders, such as container gardening, can help with plant identification and may reduce plant maintenance.

- Use of mulch or landscaping felt between plants/ seedlings will help reduce weeding.

- Paint can be used on garden tools, such as hoes and rakes, to provide contrast and help you see where you are using them.

  Example: White paint on the tines of a hoe provide contrast to the soil.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Prepare for any cultural activity by calling ahead and inquiring about the availability of special services.

- Theaters, opera and museums are increasingly aware of people with special needs and are taking steps to make their offerings more accessible.

- Many theaters offer headsets which provide auditory descriptions of the visual portions of a performance, such as costumes, set and actions. Some theaters and galleries offer programs in large print or on cassette.

- Many museums and galleries offer "hands-on" exhibits – exhibits you can actually touch. Some also provide auditory guided tours with enhanced descriptions of displays.

SPORTS/EXERCISE

- Many forms of exercise can be easily modified or adapted.

  Examples: Exercises can be performed while seated in a chair or by holding onto a chair.

- Audio descriptions of exercise videos can help you follow the movements on the video.

- Consider using a sighted companion to help keep score, run with you, or describe the physical layout, such as pins on the alley, sand traps on a golf course, or trees on a ski slope.

- Investigate the use of adaptive equipment such as a tandem bicycle, bowling guide rail, or lane dividers for laps in a pool.

- Remember color and contrast. Using florescent colors for golf balls, skis or fishing lures could make the difference and make the activity more fun.

- Try different ways of doing a sport. Walk with a friend instead of alone. Use a school track rather than the street for distance walking/running. Try cross country skiing rather than downhill skiing.

not the end...

a new beginning

Many of the tips and suggestions presented here are only the start to learning to live with a vision impairment. There are many resources and services available in each state to help you, your family and friends.

Professionals, such as low vision doctors, rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation teachers, orientation and mobility instructors and social workers, are available to provide instruction and guidance in specific areas.

For further information contact:

The Lighthouse Inc., 111 East 59th Street,
New York, NY 10022, (212) 821-9200.

For information nationwide, call The Lighthouse Inc. Information and Resource Service, toll free, at 1-800-334-5497.

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